

# **U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND'S STRATEGY OF COOPERATIVE REGIONAL PEACETIME ENGAGEMENT**



**1998**



# MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

The United States Southern Command's (USSOUTHCOM) *Strategy of Cooperative Regional Peacetime Engagement* outlines our strategic philosophy and goals. It also lays out an approach for achieving these goals by accomplishing strategic aims. This Strategy is realistic, affordable, and achievable. It identifies and defines theater-wide strategic concepts fundamental to the creation of the theater engagement and counter drug plans.

USSOUTHCOM derived its strategy from national objectives and interests, which embody the concepts of shape, respond, and prepare now. Using shared ideals, we shape cooperative opportunities with other countries to create conditions that support the development of institutions which advance democracy and regional stability. USSOUTHCOM will respond to hemispheric or regional challenges such as narco trafficking and other transnational dangers, natural disasters, instability, and threats to U.S. vital national interests. Ideally, this response will be multilateral in nature, involving the cooperative participation of other nations within the hemisphere. USSOUTHCOM will also prepare for the future by reinforcing success and assisting regional security forces in prudent preparations to strengthen multilateral commitments against emerging and shared challenges.



## VISION

A community of democratic, stable, and prosperous nations successfully countering illicit drug activities and other transnational threats; served by professional, modernized, interoperable security forces that embrace democratic principles, demonstrate respect for human rights, are subordinate to civil authority, and are capable and supportive of multilateral responses to challenges.

Each nation is unique in its prosperity, stability, and ethnic background; and this diversity requires an astute country-specific focus. Yet, regional commonalties of geography, economic environment, and shared region-specific threats link countries to regional approaches and security cooperation. Cooperation shapes the theater's future security environment to recognize shared challenges, and establishes a common understanding of the nature of a requisite response.

USSOUTHCOM's vision is founded upon hemispheric cooperation. Clearly, we have an opportunity to further national interests by strengthening democratic institutions in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Successful initiatives or actions do not occur in isolation, but are integral parts of a cooperative effort. Therefore, USSOUTHCOM's essential tasks are to garner thought, ideas, and support to effectively implement this strategy, and maintain a proactive and long-range view to achieve the vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C.E. Wilhelm".

C.E. WILHELM

General, U.S. Marine Corps

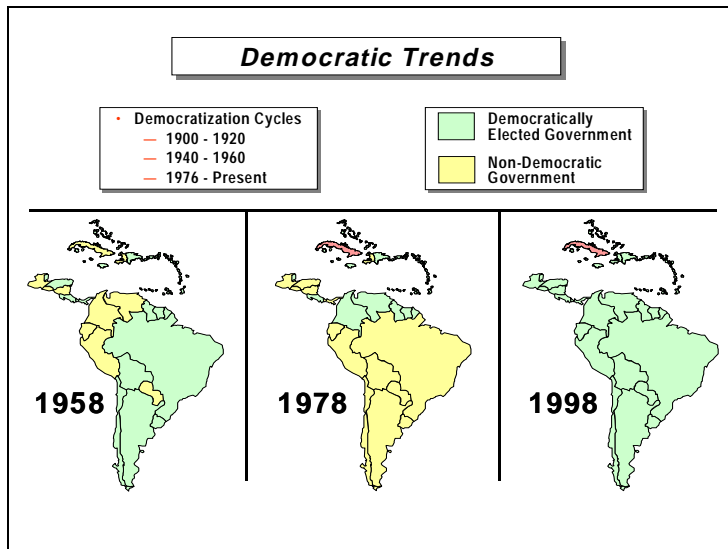
Commander in Chief, U.S. Southern Command



*"The task of our regional strategy is precisely to use our defense and military assets in peacetime engagement to avoid and prevent crises."*

*Security Strategy for the Americas*

## Strategic Environment



**Opportunities.** With the addition of the Caribbean Nations and the waters surrounding Central and South America, the focus of USSOUTHCOM has changed from one dealing primarily with a land-based theater to a more balanced AOR with continental, maritime, and aerospace dimensions – spanning over 12 million square miles. The region is already a hallmark of success—a wave of democracy has swept through the Western Hemisphere, and Cuba stands alone as a bastion of archaic ideology. The opportunity exists to sustain these positive trends. Our task is to nurture democratic roots, help develop institutions, and reinforce success. Although the nations in the region are diverse, we share a focus on common values and a desire for economic freedom and prosperity. Nevertheless, the growth

of democracy in the region is uneven.

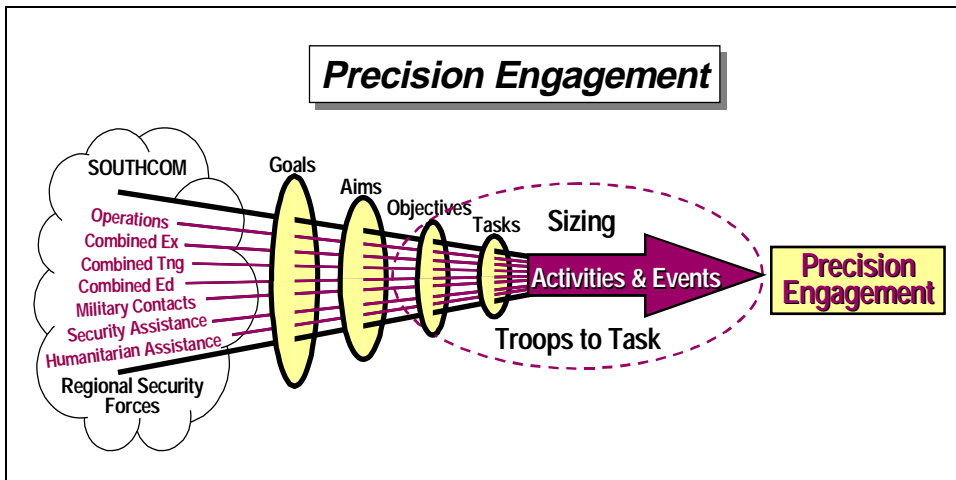
**Challenges.** Some of the region's democracies remain fragile; they face economic income distribution adversity, a rapid population growth, proliferating transnational threats and rising expectations which are difficult for governments to satisfy. Transnational threats, such as drugs, challenge the well-being and moral fiber of the United States and its regional neighbors. The threats include organized crime, international terrorism, environmental concerns, illegal migration, de-mining, and problems associated with uncontrolled demobilization of military and paramilitary forces. The challenges grow more complex because of the region's illegal trafficking in narcotics and arms, regional instabilities and excessive maritime claims. These instabilities are the product of long standing border conflicts, insurgencies, perceptions of weapons proliferation, and extra-hemispheric influences complicating the region's progress toward democratic values and economic prosperity.

### MISSION

USSOUTHCOM shapes the environment within its area of responsibility by conducting theater engagement and counterdrug activities in order to promote democracy, stability and collective approaches to threats to regional security; when required responds unilaterally or multilaterally to crises that threaten regional stability or national interests, and prepares to meet future hemispheric challenges.

### A Stable, Prosperous, Democratic Region Cooperating to Achieve Mutual Interests

Increasing interdependency among Western Hemispheric countries supports the growing trend toward diplomatic resolution of disputes, the expanding acceptance of confidence and security building measures, and ultimately reduces the potential for intra-hemispheric hostilities. Sustaining these



positive trends assists in defining future regional security cooperation. These patterns—emerging in part due to the vacuum left by the fading of an old order—must be nurtured. The institutional transformation of regional security forces, as they adopt appropriate roles and missions, must be cultivated. This cultivation supports democratic development, defines proper civil-military relations, fosters civilian control of security

forces, and develops respect for human rights and the rule of law. Working cooperatively with regional security forces, USSOUTHCOM conducts precision engagement to foster the positive development of democratic institutions, while protecting our engagement forces. Integral to this development is sustaining, strengthening and expanding multilateral security cooperation to enhance regional and theater-wide security and stability.

### STRATEGIC AIMS

- Sustain, Strengthen and Expand Multilateral Security Cooperation with Security Forces in the Region
- Assist in Development of Roles and Missions, and Appropriate Modernization of Regional Security Forces
- Assist in Peaceful Resolution of Disputes and Promote Confidence and Security Building Measures
- Promote and Support Democratic Institutions, Civilian Control of Military/Security Forces
- Promote and Support Respect for Human Rights and the Environment, and Adherence to the Rule of Law

### An Effective Capability and Will to Respond to Theater Challenges and Support Counter Drug Operations

USSOUTHCOM strives to shape the security environment through cooperative regional peacetime engagement; yet, the command maintains the capability to respond when U.S. interests are threatened. Although insurgencies and arms proliferation are largely contained, pockets of insurgent activity possess the potential to poison relations with neighbors as those threats evolve and escalate into more serious confrontations. A collaborative, multilateral approach is crucial to combating transnational threats, responding to natural disasters, and essential to promoting regional stability and hemispheric

prosperity. At the same time, USSOUTHCOM's counter drug operations provide detection, monitoring, tracking, and intelligence support to the international counter drug effort. Hemispheric counter drug cooperation is vital to interdiction activities and eradication efforts. USSOUTHCOM's approach to support counter drug activities envisions an interagency and participating nation approach. The desire is to posture regional security forces to close down cross-border support for narco trafficking, stem the erosion of host nation sovereignty, and achieve a regional response to a mutual challenge.



## STRATEGIC AIMS

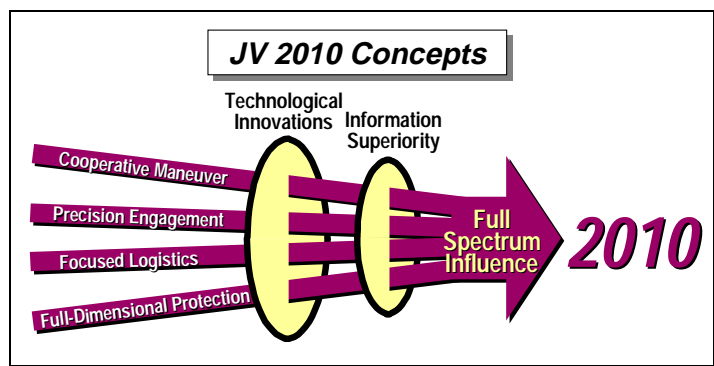
- Assist in Reducing Illicit Source Zone Activities and Flow of Illegal Drugs through the Transit Zone
- Combat Terrorism and its Sponsorship Directed Against U.S. Interests/Citizens and Assist Countries to Combat Terrorism in the Region
- Support Nations in AOR to Thwart Efforts which Undermine Democracy
- Protect U.S. Citizens, Facilities and Vital Interests
- Maintain Freedom of Access to Recognized International Waters and Airways
- Strengthen Cooperative Efforts to Meet the Challenge of Transnational Threats
- Prevent and Counter Threat or Threatened Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction
- When Directed, Rapidly Respond to Disasters and Provide Humanitarian Assistance

## Postured to Capitalize on Future Opportunities

USSOUTHCOM prepares now! These preparations fully embrace technological innovations and information superiority. The command leverages these capabilities by capitalizing on emerging technologies and revolutions in business and military affairs. By integrating these capabilities, USSOUTHCOM conducts enhanced, efficient operations and activities, and influences the *next* generation of technological advancements. Concurrently, the infusion of Joint Vision 2010 concepts must preserve the interoperability of existing systems employed by regional security forces. As we prepare to exploit opportunities and meet future challenges, special emphasis must be given to consequence management and activities that must be accomplished following the termination of an emergency. As our strategy unfolds, force protection and



quality of life of the force will be matured and honed. Refined and coordinated country-specific force protection programs coupled with enhanced threat acquisition and analysis reduce the vulnerability of our personnel and facilities while advancing mission accomplishment.

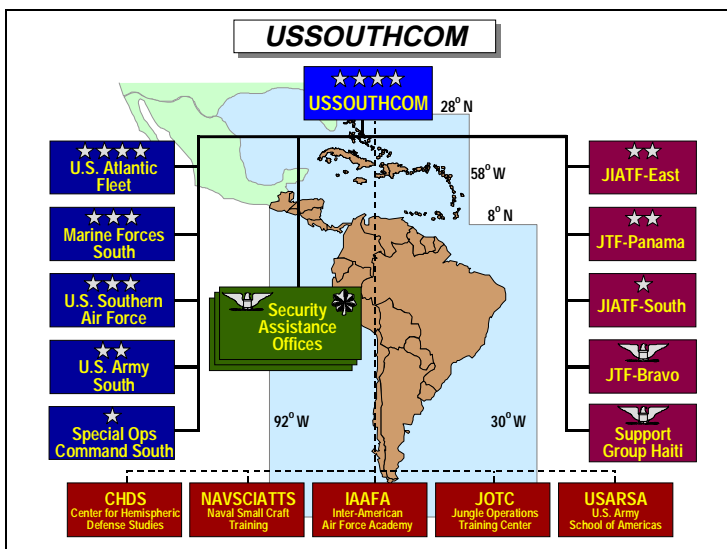


## STRATEGIC AIMS

- Ensure Full Spectrum Influence through Exercises, Training, and Continuous Refinement of Deliberate Planning
- Integrate, Assess and Influence Joint Vision 2010 Concepts
- Improve C4ISR Capabilities by Leveraging Technological Advancements and Innovations
- Enhance Information and Intelligence Exchanges
- Conduct Precision Engagement to Optimize Coordination and Interoperability with Interagency, Civil Agencies, and Regional Security Forces
- Achieve Full Dimensional Protection to Better Protect Forces in Theater
- Conduct Focused Logistics through an Efficient Theater Infrastructure to Support Operations and Engagement Activities

## Accomplishing USSOUTHCOM's Mission

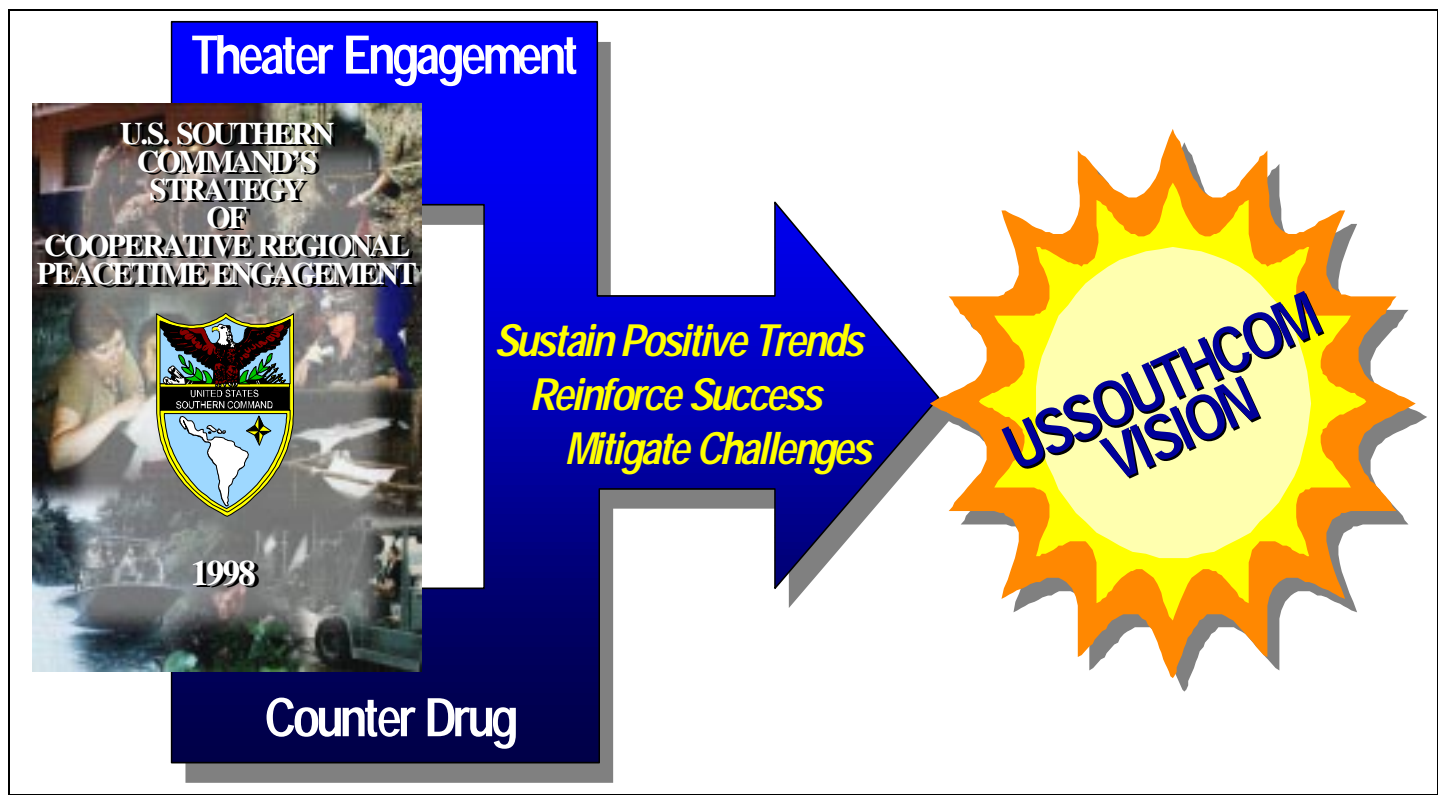
USSOUTHCOM soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, coast guardsmen, and civilians are key to the successful accomplishment of our mission. Our components link the right troops with the right skills at the right time to precisely and cooperatively assist in the attainment of USSOUTHCOM's vision. Equally important are the Security Assistance Offices within the theater who implement the command's prioritized efforts. Reserve and National Guard units provide vital support to USSOUTHCOM's operations and activities. USSOUTHCOM, in coordination with other governmental agencies, conducts theater engagement activities and counter narcotics operations in support of the



Ambassadors' country plans. Central to the effective execution of our mission is a properly structured theater architecture and an appropriate level of balanced forward U.S. military presence. Strategic hubs enable the command to conduct and support activities into South America, Central America and the Caribbean. Forward military presence, operating through these hubs, demonstrates commitment to our hemispheric neighbors while allowing us to conduct engagement, support counter narcotics operations, as well as respond to emergencies.

## A New Century...

Opportunities for successful engagement in the Western Hemisphere will crescendo as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Effective restructuring prepares USSOUTHCOM to conduct regional engagement and counter drug operations in a complex and increasingly urban environment. The command continues to provide military support to the attainment of national objectives: promote democracy, enhance security, and bolster America's economic prosperity. Balanced, multi-capable forward U.S. military presence provides the ability to exploit opportunities and respond to a variety of future challenges—utilizing a refined, efficient in-theater support infrastructure. Future engagement must leverage emerging technologies and maximize their effectiveness to promote regional security. To that end, U.S. military forces, working closely with interagency elements, are capable of executing a myriad of activities that sustain and shape opportunities within the theater.



**NEW REALITIES . . .**

**FUTURE THINKING . . .**

**TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES . . .**

**Cooperate & Coordinate Versus Command & Control**

**Encourage Instead of Criticize**

**Mutual Trust & Support**

**Combined Interagency & Joint Approach**

**Respect Diversity & Sovereignty**

**Expect No Credit & Take None**

**Recognize Non-Governmental Interests**

**Protect & Preserve the Force**

**USSOUTHCOM  
CORE PRINCIPLES**